



Likkutei Sichos

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Modeling Selflessness

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1.

BELOVED IS MAN & JEW

The mishnah says:¹ “Beloved is man, for he was created in the image {of G-d}. A special love was made known to him in that he was created in the image {of G-d}, as it says,² “For in the image of G-d, He made man.”

Tosafos Yomtov says that since the mishnah quotes the verse, “For in the image...,” which was said to Noach and his children, it can be inferred that “beloved is man...” refers to all people, (even) Gentiles.³

With this he explains the change in language from this section {of the mishnah} where the author uses the description (beloved is) **man**, and in the latter sections {where he says}, (beloved are) **Israel**. This is because in the later sections, it refers to the dearness of the Jews alone (because of the virtues) — (“They are called children to Hashem,” “A precious instrument was given to them.”) The phrase, “created in the image {of G-d},” however, applies to all humans.

Tosafos Yomtov explains the reason this idea {that all peoples are dear to Hashem for they were created in His image} was included in tractate *Avos*, a guide that teaches Jews how to serve Hashem, is because it has a practical application for **Jews**. *Tosafos Yomtov* quotes Rambam’s statement:⁴ “Moshe our teacher (peace to him) was commanded by the Almighty to compel all people to accept the mitzvos commanded to the Gentiles,” and they must observe them (not because “it makes sense,” but) “because they were so commanded by Hashem in the Torah.”⁵

Therefore, the mishnah’s author included the statement, “Beloved is man for he was created in the image {of G-d}.” He teaches how a Jew must (and can)

¹ *Pirkei Avos* 3:14.

² *Bereishis* 9:6.

³ {In the original, “*bnei Noach*”; “descendents of Noach.”}

⁴ *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Melachim*,” ch. 8, par. 10.

⁵ *Ibid.*, end of ch. 8; (only then are they termed “the pious of the nations”; see ch. 6).

influence “all people” to observe their Divine commandments by explaining to a Gentile that he is precious because “he is created in the image {of G-d}”; therefore, it is “incumbent upon him to fulfill the will of his Creator.”⁶

2.

THE INTELLECTUAL SOUL

It is clear and obvious that even according to the interpretation that “man” refers to all of humanity, it also refers to Jews who are certainly “created in the image (of Hashem).”

This fits with the Previous Rebbe’s⁷ explanation that the term “image” alludes to the intellectual soul that is found in both Jews and Gentiles. The double expression used by the mishnah — “Beloved is man, for he was created in the image {of G-d}; a special love was made known to him in that he was created in the image {of G-d}” — refers to two types of “images.” “Beloved is man, for he was created in the image {of G-d}” refers to the intellectual soul “that exists in all mankind;” and the statement, “a **special** love was made known to him in that he was created in the image {of G-d},” refers to the intellectual soul of a Jew. The image of the Jewish intellectual soul is **higher** than the image of mankind’s soul in general (see Section 4 below).

Nevertheless, since there is a common denominator between Jews and Gentiles in that they both possess an “image {of Hashem},” it is understood that the image of a **Jew** is

[not so much intended for matters and *avodah*⁸ that are completely separate from Gentiles, because the emphasis for **those** matters are in later sections (and virtues) in the mishnah: “Beloved are Israel who are called

⁶ Rashi on the *Pirkei Avos* 3:14.

⁷ *Maamar “Chaviv Adam,”* 5702, ch. 1 (et passim).

⁸ {Divine service.}

children to Hashem... because they were given a precious instrument,” the (virtues and) preciousness which are delineated for Jews alone, but primarily]

intended for use with a Jew’s *avodah* with Gentiles. Meaning, even in **that** *avodah*, it is important (not only that a Gentile is “created in {His} image,” and therefore, “it is incumbent upon him to fulfill the will of his Creator,” but even the fact) that a Jew has an image (but he has a higher form of image than the rest of mankind).

We need to clarify: We said that a Gentile has to fulfill “the will of his Creator” because “he was created in the image {of Hashem},” so what difference does it make that the clause, “beloved is man who was created in {Hashem’s} image” also applies to a Jew, and that he also possesses this virtue and is beloved (but in a higher way: “a special love was made known to him...”)?

3.

TORAH IS FOR GENTILES?

In a similar vein, we need to understand something about the above-mentioned law codified by Rambam. Jew are commanded “to compel all mankind to accept the mitzvos that were commanded to the Gentiles.” Furthermore, Jews are commanded to ensure that the Gentiles fulfill the commandments (not because “it makes sense,” but) because “Hashem commanded them **in the Torah** and informed us through **Moshe, our teacher, peace to him**, that the erstwhile Gentiles were commanded to follow them.”

This seems puzzling: Why is the fulfillment of the Noahide commandments connected with Jews (that they {Jews} need “to influence all mankind” to fulfill their mitzvos) and with the giving of the Torah (and Moshe, our teacher)?

With respect to this obligation for Jews, we could explain that Hashem wanted Jews to be involved in “improving the entire world motivating the

nations to serve Hashem,”⁹ and therefore, they need to influence “all mankind” to fulfill the will of their Creator.

However, it isn’t clear why **Gentiles** need to fulfill their mitzvos (not because Hashem had commanded **Adam**, etc.,¹⁰ but) because “Hashem commanded them **in the Torah** and informed us through **Moshe**.”

It makes sense to say that Jews need to fulfill their mitzvos — even those which were commanded **before** *Matan Torah* (e.g., the mitzvah of circumcision) — as commandments from Hashem to Moshe at Sinai,¹¹ because the giving of the Torah effected a fundamental change in Jews who were then chosen as a people by Hashem.¹² Therefore, their previous mitzvos were also transformed.

What connection, however, does *Matan Torah* have with Gentiles? Why should we say that beforehand they observed their mitzvos because of Hashem’s command to Adam, but afterwards, they observed the mitzvos because “Hashem commanded them in the Torah...through Moshe?”

4.

IMAGE = THE INTELLECTUAL SOUL

To clarify this, we need to preface with the Previous Rebbe’s explanation of the advantage of the intellectual soul (“image”) of a Jew over the intellectual soul of the rest of humanity. “In it (the intellectual soul of a Jew), there is a spiritual sensitivity, and although by nature, it is mortal intellect, it possesses a modicum of spiritual sensitivity.”

⁹ *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Melachim*,” ch. 11, par. 4 (regarding Moshiach).

¹⁰ *Sanhedrin* 56b.

¹¹ Rambam’s *Commentary on Mishnah*, “*Chulin*,” end of ch. 7.

¹² Alter Rebbe’s *Shulchan Aruch*, “*Orach Chaim*,” sec. 60, par. 4.

The intellectual soul of a Gentile, on the other hand, entails a materialistic understanding. And as explained in several places,¹³ secular studies bring a person to a feeling of self, leading him even to coarseness, etc.

This seems to require clarification: The function of intellect is to clarify the “truth” of a thing; therefore, intellect entails objectivity (rising above one’s subjective tendencies and interests) — “The spirit... of man is that which ascends on high,”¹⁴ unlike that of an animal, “which descends below.”¹⁵

So how could it be that the nature of the Gentile’s intellectual soul is the opposite — it **lowers** him, making him coarse?

It makes sense if we refer to the intellect of the animalistic soul — the intellect that is connected to emotions — since the intent of this intellect is to produce emotions, which are all about “the feeling of **self**.”¹⁶ Thus, it would make sense that the intellect which is connected to the emotions will bring a person to a feeling of self, and from this feeling, to coarseness.

However, the function of the **intellectual** soul (even that of a Gentile) is not to produce emotions. Rather, it is intellect for the sake of intellect itself, like the study of astronomy and so forth. So why should **this** intellect bring a person to self-centeredness and coarseness?

The explanation: The propensity of intellect for objectivity is related to a person’s lack of concern (for his predispositions, etc. — for himself), his self-deprecation. Since the intellect of the intellectual soul is involved with worldly matters, and {the world exudes} a sense of selfhood and autonomy, therefore, this intellect will also develop a sense of self importance, which will impede it from attaining objectivity, as it ought to.

The intellectual soul of a Jew, which also understands worldly matters (human intelligence), **does** have “a modicum of spiritual sensitivity” (not

¹³ First *maamar* entitled, “*Vayomer Moshe*” 5709, sec. 2 ff.; et al.

¹⁴ *Koheles* 3:21.

¹⁵ *Koheles* 3:21.

¹⁶ See “*Vayomer Moshe*,” *ibid.*, sec. 3; et al.

inherently, but) because a Jew has a G-dly soul which is beyond the world. This G-dly soul also engenders *bittul* in a person's intellectual soul. Therefore, in a Jew's intellectual soul, there are both qualities. Although by nature, it is **mortal** intellect, it still possesses a modicum of spiritual sensitivity," as discussed.

5.

THE INTELLECT OF A JEW VS. THAT OF A GENTILE

Now we can also see how the Previous Rebbe's earlier explanation of the mishnah — that "beloved is man who was created in {Hashem's} image" refers to the intellectual soul of mankind, in general; and "a special love was made known to him in that he was created in the {Hashem's} image" refers to the intellectual soul of a Jew — is hinted at in the mishnah.

"Beloved is man who was created in {Hashem's} image," means that the love for man is **expressed** in (and results from) the fact that "he is created in {Hashem's} image. "A **special** love was made known to him in that he was created in {Hashem's} image" refers to a deeper love, an intrinsic love, and **because of this** {essential love}, he was created in the image of Hashem. "He was created in {Hashem's} image" as a **result** of the special love.

This is the difference between the "image" of a Gentile and the "image" of a Jew:

A Gentile is beloved because of his intellectual soul (the image in him). The love for a Jew, which is linked to the image within him, is not on account of his image within, but on the contrary — because he is beloved, he was given an image: Since he is **a Jew** — special love was made known to him (to the extent) in that he was created in the image {of Hashem} — therefore, he was created with an "image"; he was given his intellectual soul. Only then is the intellect of (even) the intellectual soul perfect. It has the nature of "the spirit... of man is that which ascends on high.")

6.

CONNECTING JEW WITH GENTILE

This also explains the law codified by Rambam that a Jew must compel “all people to accept the mitzvos that were commanded to Gentiles.”

In order for a Gentile to fulfill his mitzvos properly, he cannot rely on his “rationale,” because **his** own intellectual soul could lead him to becoming coarse, etc., and therefore, his *avodah* must be associated with a Jew. When (the intellectual soul of) a Gentile will be directed by a Jew, whose “image” (intellectual soul) is unflawed, then a Gentile will also achieve a state of “the spirit... of man is that which ascends on high.”

Therefore, “beloved is man (a Gentile) who was created in {Hashem’s} image” is contingent on “a special love was made known to him (to Jews) in that he was created in the image of {Hashem}” (as discussed in Section 2). For a Gentile needs to know that the perfection of **his** image depends on the image of a Jew.

Since a Jew’s divine soul is the cause of the image within a Jew, this cause imbues the result, the ensuing image, with its own character, which is a natural *bittul* of the intellectual soul (as discussed earlier). Therefore, a Gentile’s spiritual *avodah* is considered complete, placing him in the class of “the righteous among the nations of the world,” when he fulfills his mitzvos because “Hashem commanded them **in the Torah** and informed us of them **through Moshe**.” The Gentile fulfills them because of the revelation at *Matan Torah*, when Jews attained their (exalted stature —) essential love (they were called children of Hashem and were given a precious instrument).

[Now we can also understand Rambam’s subsequent remarks: “However, if he fulfills them out of intellectual conviction, he is not of the righteous among the nations of the world, **nor of their wise men**.” It is difficult to understand why if he fulfills them “out of **intellectual** conviction” he is **not** “**of their wise**

men”? Rather, when a Gentile does not recognize that he relies on Jews and on *Matan Torah*, ultimately, even his **intellect** will be deficient.]

7.

BELOVED TIMES TWO

Considering all the above, we can understand the common denominator between the double expressions used in the first statement with that used in the latter two statements:

Beloved is Israel, for they are called children to Hashem. A special love was made known to them in that they called children to Hashem... Beloved are Israel in that a precious instrument was given to them. A special love was made known to them in that they were given a precious instrument.

With respect to these two statements, the Previous Rebbe also explains the double expression in each: “Beloved is Israel... a special love was made known to them...” refers to two different levels. “Beloved is Israel... a special love was made known to them in that they were called children to Hashem,” refers to “the Jewish **body**” and {the statement’s second clause refers} to “the G-dly soul and the exalted stature of the **soul**.” The {two clauses in the} statement: “Beloved is Israel... a special love was made known to them in that they were given a precious instrument” refers to the revealed dimension of Torah and to the inner dimension of Torah {respectively}.

This statement, as well, has the point (as we said earlier regarding the double expression used in the first statement) that “beloved is Israel” is reliant upon “a special love was made known to them...”:

The preciousness of the “bodies of Israel” is dependent upon “the virtue of the soul,” as explained already at length,¹⁷ that Hashem’s choice of the Jewish body¹⁸ is imbued in the body through the *avodah* of the soul. [This is why there

¹⁷ See, at length, *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 18, p. 409, fn. 71.

¹⁸ *Tanya*, ch. 49.

could be a situation in which the body deteriorates completely, as it says,¹⁹ “These are the ones who do not have a portion in the World to Come”²⁰ — although the Jewish soul can never be destroyed, G-d forbid.]²¹

Similarly, regarding the revealed and the deeper dimensions of Torah: When a person learns the revealed part of Torah {in a way that} it is also imbued with the deeper part, then the study of the revealed part becomes for him a life-giving medicine.²²

— Based on a *maamar* and a talk delivered on Shabbos *parshas Shelach*, 5737 (1977)

¹⁹ *Rosh Hashanah* 17a.

²⁰ *Sanhedrin* 10:1.

²¹ See *Teshuvos Ubiurim* (Kehot publ., 5734), sec. 8, par. 4.

²² *Yoma* 72b.